

# Your Child's Brain

Problems are a part of life, but most can be prevented or solved. One good thing about problems is that they can help us teach our children about life. The reason for this is because our brains are so complex. Understanding how a child's brain develops can guide us in teaching our children how to become problem solvers. It helps to think of the brain as having three parts that develops from the bottom up.

## *The Old Brain:*

- found at the base, where the brain meets the spine
- most developed part of brain when baby is born
- controls basic functions of the body and gives us the "fight, flight, or freeze" reaction

## *The Emotional Brain:*

- this part develops next and triggers the experience of new emotions
- in the second six months, a baby can feel and show fear and anger
  - this is where our memories are stored

## *The Rational Brain:*

- controls emotions, making good decisions, empathy, learning from consequences, and morality (knowing right from wrong)
  - doesn't finish developing until around age 25

When a child gets stressed out, the brain releases chemicals to help the body deal with it. In small doses this is fine, but when the brain releases too much, it can stunt the growth of the brain. This is called toxic stress.

When parents hug or play with their kids, the brain releases a different chemical that helps the child bond and make them feel safe and secure.